

# **PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF JOS NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study set out to critically examine the place of public relations in the administration of local government areas in plateau state, with Jos North Local Government Area as an area of study. The study examines the extent to which public relations is used to manage the local government area, which has been riddled with one form of crisis or the other, in the last ten years. In addition, the paper examines the factors which impede the effective practice of public relations in Jos North Local Government Area and also, the public relations strategies that can be used to effectively manage the crisis in Jos. The survey research method was adopted and the questionnaire was used as instrument of data collection. One hundred (100) copies of questionnaire were administered to the sampled population. Findings show that, although the Local government endeavours to inform the people about its policies and programmes, the information provided, is done on an occasional basis. Findings show that there is a general dissatisfaction with public relations practice in Jos North Local Government Area. Based on the findings, the paper concludes that the extent to which Jos North Local Government recognises and makes use of public relations is little. On the basis of the findings and conclusion, the paper, among others recommended that, local governments in Nigeria should evolve public relations policies, which will serve as guides towards their attainment of public relations objectives.

**Keywords:** Public Relations, Communication, Local Government, Administration and Peace building.

## INTRODUCTION:

Public relations in Nigeria has come a long way, especially in the post independence era, where there has been significant development in government public relations activities. Public relations has also shown tremendous growth in recent years worldwide and its growth is attributed to numerous reasons. Public relations exists in every activity, which involves human beings, even where it is an individual activity. Thus, in addition to reinforcing the ubiquity of public relations, Nwosu (1996,p.8) went on to spell out its usefulness to governments in contemporary societies, which are democratic and need the consent, support and mutual understanding of their people, for better administration. It is in the light of that relationship that public relations practitioners in government see themselves as the linking bridge between government and its owners and the civil society.

Since 1976, when local government reforms were carried out in Nigeria, the local governments have always had to contend with greater responsibility placed on their shoulders than ever before. Among other things, the guidelines of the reforms demanded the performance of numerous functions from the local government. As noted by Ekumankama (1996), the local governments are:

- to make appropriate services and development activities by developing on or delegating them to local representative bodies;
- to facilitate the exercise of democratic self-government close to the local levels of our society and encourage initiative and leadership potential;
- to mobilise human and material resources, through the involvement of members of the public in their local governments; and
- to provide a two-way channel of communication between local communities and the government, both state and federal.

In view of the guideline of the reforms, a lot of duties were conferred on the local government, by encouraging citizenship participation in the day to day running of the local areas. The local governments have automatically become democratised. One characteristic of democratic institution is their desire to win the understanding and support of the populace. The present democratic posture of the local government demands that they provide information on all they do for the people they govern. This means they have to make themselves, their policies and programmes, clearly understood at all times, by those on whose behalf, they act. This is the sacred duty which the democratic local government owes the governed. The extent to which the local government meets these obligations and relates with the people and institutions within and sometimes, outside their area of authority, should largely depend on the efforts of public relations.

In fact, public relations ought to be imperative for the local government administration in Nigeria. Perhaps, the local government should make public relations principles and procedures, their major components of governance, especially at the grass root level, where the actions of government touch the lives of the citizens most profoundly. Organised public relations is capable of yielding a lot of benefits to local government administrators in Nigeria. This will enable them to successfully mobilise the rural dwellers and achieve mass education of the people at the grass roots. That the local government can immensely benefit from public relations activities cannot be over-emphasised. Thus, the paper examines the place of public relations in the administration of local governments in Nigeria, using Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State as a case study.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Although adjudged to concern every organisation, whether government or non-governmental organisation, the concept of public relations remains largely mis-conceived by many a people involved in its practice. Some believe that public relations is publicity given to political aspirants, business executives, etc.; others think that public relations is a series of gifts for journalist, prospective supporters, etc.. Some think that it is a means of gaining coverage. The result of this array of misconception is a lopsided perception of what actually connotes public relations. In the government circles, due to these misconceptions, public relations officers are often treated as errand people who must top the list of those to be terminated from service whenever the need arises.

Local governments are said to employ public relations efforts through their information offices. However, how far these public relations activities are performed by these offices remains speculative. The present

dispensation in the local government settings by observation shows that personal assistants to local government chairmen usurp the functions of public relations unit of such local government areas. The present local government structure in Nigeria really shows that the information officers are vested with discharging the functions of public relations. But the question of how adequately organised and how well these information officers are placed to perform their tasks for enhanced governance is the problem this study investigates.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

The study aims at accomplishing the following objectives.

- a. To determine whether or not Jos North Local Government Area carries out public relations activities.
- b. To determine the effectiveness or otherwise, of public relations activities in Jos North Local Government Area
- c. To ascertain the factors that militate against effective practice of public relations in Jos North Local Government Area

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

Based on the problem and the objectives of the study, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

- a. To what extent does Jos North Local Government Area recognise and make use of public relations in the administration of the local populace?
- b. How effective or well organised is the information unit which serves as the public relations outfit of this local government area?
- c. What are the factors that affect the effective practice of public relations in Jos North Local Government?

### **BRIEF BACKGROUND OF JOS NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:**

Jos North Local Government Area as it is currently constituted was carved out of the old Jos Local Government during the 1991 Local Government Area creation exercise, with Jos town as the Council headquarters. It is made up of one district, Gwong, which encompasses the Jos township area and has a population 429,300 people, based on the 2006 National Population Census. The metropolitan nature of the council provide it with an added advantage while physical infrastructure like good roads, pipe born water, electricity supply, etc, are available throughout the entire. Jos North Local Government Area is inhabited by many ethnic and linguistic groups. These groups include the indigenous tribes like the Beroms, the Anaguta and the Afizere (Jarawa) Other groups are the Yorubas, Hausas, Kanuris, Fulanis, Igbos, etc (Plateau State Today, 2008).

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:**

Theories are of great relevance in every academic endeavour. Asemah (2010,p.345) observes that public relations theories generally refers to generalisations that are put forward to explain, describe, prescribe or predict the behaviours of the publics to an organisation. It can be said that theories lend themselves to various tests and analysis such that the phenomenon central to the research get explained, clarified and even predicted as the case may be. Thus, for us to have a better understanding of this paper, the two way symmetric and Melvin Sharpe's behavioural models are been chosen to provide the theoretical framework.

#### **Two- Way Symmetric Model**

The two-way symmetric model as posited by Grunig and Hunt (1984) serves as the theoretical framework for this paper. The duo posited that public relations must be based on the principle of give and take. The model depicts a communication relationship where the sender/ the source and the publics share initiative and power more equally. The two-way communication model lays emphasis on the need for two-way communication between an organisation (in this case, the government) and its publics. That is, it calls for feedback. The organisation needs to know about the publics and the publics also need to know about the organisation; in this way, mutual understanding and goodwill will be achieved, this will however lead to the achievement of the aims and objectives set by the organisation. Thus, the concept envisages the existence of two-way communication with inbuilt feedback between an organisation and its publics. With communication

coming from both parties, there will be an attainment of parity and this will lead to mutual understanding . Asemah (2010,p.356) notes that the two-way communication model uses communication to negotiate with the publics to resolve crises and to promote mutual understanding and respect between the organisation and the publics. Asemah further notes that what public relations is all about is, people learning about each other and developing a mutual understanding and one of the ways to do that is, through the two-way symmetric model. The model is basically a way for two groups of people to share ideas and hopefully gain something from the experience.

The import of the above is that the two-way symmetric model lays emphasis on dialogue between two parties instead of monologue. The two way symmetric model is sine qua non to mutual goodwill between the government and its citizenry in the sense that it helps the government and the governed to better understand each other. Through the two-way communication process, members of the public are kept abreast of government's policies and programmes and they are able to access them and react to them.

### **MELVIN SHARPE'S BEHAVIOURAL MODEL OF PUBLIC RELATIONS:**

The model was created by old public relations work horse, Melvin L. Sharpe. Sharpe's model is premised on the assumption that certain behavioural actions are necessary for good public relations as those behaviour lubricate relationships and that communication is a tool for creating awareness of those actions. Sharpe says that such behaviours are necessary, if the organisation must achieve its aims and objectives, this is because, when such behaviour are exhibited, it brings about mutual understanding between the organisation and its publics. They are the five behavioural principles, necessary for the performance of public relations. The behavioural principles that achieve harmonious public relationships and what they achieve are:

#### **HONESTY:**

public relations practice is based on honesty. There is no point deceiving the publics, because when you deceive them, they lose confidence in you. Honesty builds trust between the organisation and the publics. Honesty brings about credibility. That is, it makes the publics to believe the organisation's policies and programmes. This in turn lubricates relationships between the organisation and the publics for the achievement of organisational goals.

#### **OPENNESS:**

The organisation needs to operate an open-door policy, as this will bring about mutual understanding. There is the need to allow both the internal and external publics to express their views concerning the organisation, as this will give room for consistency of actions for confidence.

#### **FAIRNESS:**

The organisation has to be fair to the publics, whether external or internal. This can be done through corporate social responsibility and other infrastructure that is, for external publics. For the internal publics, there is the need to take care of the employees, promoting them as at when due, giving them allowances, Christmas bonus, among others. When the organisation does that, the publics will definitely reciprocate.

#### **CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION:**

There is the need to communicate to the publics on a regular basis. Continuous communication will make the publics to understand the prospects, problems, policies and objectives of the organisation; it prevents alienation and builds relationships between the two parties that is, the organisation and the publics.

#### **CONTINUOUS IMAGE ANALYSIS:**

This entails carrying out research so as to know what the internal and external publics feel about the organisation. The public relations man should constantly carryout image research so as to know whether the image is positive or negative, favourable or unfavourable. Continuous image analysis is therefore necessary for corrective adjustments in behaviour or communication.

The model is relevant to the study because it lays emphasis on the five behavioural principles that achieve harmonious public relationships and what they achieve. This implies therefore that, if the government adopts this five principles, it will go a long way in maintaining peace in Jos North Local Government Area.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:**

If our society continues to function in a democratic way through change and adjustment, through accommodation of varying groups and viewpoints of one another, through progress at uneven rates of the constituent elements that make up society, there will be even greater necessity than there is today for a public relations practitioner. Government continues to be the highest employer of public relations practitioners; yet, public relations processes are adopted in a haphazard and inconsistent manner. They exist and in some cases, they are simply non-existent. This goes to say that government often leaves the management of their reputation in hands of people who do not have the requisite knowledge and information on the organisation and its boundaries (Adamolekun, 2005,p.1). Nwosu (1996,p.204) says that:

Whether military or civilian, government must have the support and acceptance of the citizenry to be effective and to even survive for a reasonable period. In theory and in practice, every government derives its legitimacy or rights to govern from the people or citizens. In a true democracy, government is voted in by the people to hold power, influence and control on behalf of the collectivity, the masses or citizenry.

The government as an institution is an organisation and can only succeed when it maintains mutual lines of communication between itself and its citizenry. Public relations in government in brief, is the concerted efforts of the government officials to establish appropriate and effective communication system that enables them to produce, project and sustain government's goals, aspirations, programmes, activities and policies to reach the ultimate beneficiaries of the programmes, in most cases, the community. Public relations is employed in various ways to help the government to establish mutual lines of communication for faithful exchange of ideas and perspectives between it and the governed and also, to create image for the government, both locally and internationally. The diversity of goals and activities in government is greater than in any other area of public relations (Cutlip, Centre and Broom, 2000,p.487).

Stockwell, cited in Johnson and Zawawi (2004,p.404) observes that public relations sector in modern democratic governance implements its policies by using various mass media. Government management takes two forms; dissemination of political information and dissemination of public information. Nwosu (1996,p.204) however opines that very often, many people in government, especially those in developing countries, seem to forget the relevance of public relations in the government circle and as a result, they operate as if they can do without the support and the acceptance of the citizenry. They run state affairs as rulers or feudal lords, instead of leaders or servants of the people, for whom they hold political power and trust. But the theory and practice of modern governance teaches that government, like any other social institution, must be accountable to the people and operate in the people's interest.

Black (1976,p.140) says that public relations is an essential part of management and this is true in central government as in industry. The function of public relations in government is essentially non-political. It is the province of the political parties to organise such public relations activity, as they may consider necessary to publicise or promote their party's policy. Public relations in a government department has two main tasks; to give regular information on policy, plans and achievements of the departments and to inform and educate the public on legislation, regulations and all matters that affect the daily life of citizens. It must also advise ministers and senior officials of reaction and potential reaction to actual or proposed policies. In their work on public relations and the information role of the government to the people, Wilcox, Ault and Agee (1998,p.333) declare that:

There has always been a need for Government communication if for no other reason, than to inform citizens of the services available and the manner in which they may be used. In a democracy, public information is crucial if citizens are to make intelligent judgement about the policies and activities of their elected representative.

Through information, it is hoped that citizens will have the necessary background to participate fully in the formation of government policies.

The subsidiary goals of state government public relations as supplied by Salu (1993,p.5) include:

- to assist the Local Government administration correctly to interpret itself, its policies, programmes, problems and activities, through appropriate communication channels to members of its various publics, including employers, whose understanding and cooperation will be depended upon, for the effective execution of those policies and programmes;
- to assist the local government administration to correctly identify changes in public perceptions and attitudes, which could pose serious obstacles to its efforts to draw more closely to the publics, especially in periods of emergency or occasions, requiring community wide collective effort in the execution of planned government programmes;
- to help government administrations to develop appropriate techniques for communicating effectively with their various audiences, to avoid alienating any or significant groups within their constituencies from the process of government; and
- to help government administrations to build bridges of friendship and good relations with their various publics, essential for establishing a family-like atmosphere around the field of operations of the government and thus, facilitating the mobilisation of support from these publics in the execution of programmes.

Thus, public relations communicators need to use their expertise to co-ordinate the efforts of the various ministries, produce and place them in various media of communication in such ways, methods, languages and forms the governed would understand and appreciate. In this regard, a policy or programme has to be put in various forms for the acceptance of various publics. The policies and programmes of government must not only be presented, but perfectly done not only by press relations, which is just a wing of public relations, but using all public relations efforts to ensure that government intentions are presented in the way that the publics will be ready to accept them. All these could easily be summarised and presented to the public often, through regular press briefing, where government would highlight all it had done and also use all other methods that the populace would find out on their own, by physically seeing government efforts.

## **SOME PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES THAT CAN BE USED FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION:**

### **CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY :**

Corporate social responsibility emphasises the need for every organisation, including government, to be sensitive to the needs and interests of the members of the society or community in which they exist and operate, as a way of eliciting and keeping their goodwill and support. It is social investment or involvement philosophy that helps any social institution or organisation ( plus government), to avoid taking decisions or actions that may make it to be seen by its target publics as uncaring or insensitive to their needs and interest. Nwosu (1996) says that corporate social responsibility is the intelligent and objective concern for the welfare of people and society, which restraints individuals and corporate entities (government) from engaging in policies and activities, no matter how profitable or attractive that will portray them as callous and engaging in activities that will contribute to the betterment of men and society. According to the UN Committee for Economic Development (CED), cited in Asemah (2010), a good corporate social responsibility programme usually focuses on some or all of these areas: Economic growth and efficiency, education, employment and training, human rights and equal opportunity, rural/urban renewal and development, pollution abatement, conservation and recreation, culture and arts, medical care and other government activities.

### **CRISIS MANAGEMENT:**

Crisis management is very important in Local Government administration, as it helps to prevent all forms of



crises . The public relations officer of an organisation, whether government or non-governmental, must conduct research so as to know if there is any problem that may likely lead to crisis, so that it will be nipped in the bud. There is the known–unknown crisis and there is the unknown–unknown crisis. There is the need to make conscious efforts to manage crisis through effective communication. A very special type of work that PR practitioners do is helping their organisations to resolve crises whenever they occur. They do this essentially by managing the flow of information between the organisation and the publics, via the mass media and by advising management on what to do and how to do it, so that the crisis is not aggravated. (Asemah, 2011).

### **POLICY MAKING AND POLICY COMMUNICATION:**

A PR Practitioner is a liaison between his institution and the publics. He is responsible for setting public relations policy to represent the corporation or agency to the publics and for conducting research to provide adequate feedback from the publics to the institution. Usually, a PR practitioner works closely with top-level management and is instrumental in influencing management's policy changes. The PR person can be described as a strategist who plans and executes large scale public relations efforts. It is the duty of the public relations practitioners of an organisation to communicate the policies of its organisation to the internal and external publics, so as to make them know such policies.

### **RESPONSIVE CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION:**

Communication is an ongoing and never ending thing. It has no beginning nor ending. It is a process that goes on endlessly, none stop. That is why when there is any break in communication, rumours, guessing and presumptions fill up the gap. This kind of situation creates a lapse, which results in misunderstanding, because communication has broken down. Local government administrators must never allow communication to breakdown. They must flow along with crucial stakeholders, such as community people, if administration must prosper unhindered. A responsive communication is one that is quick, sound and credible and flow two-way in a cyclical manner (Zorte, 2011).

### **RESEARCH:**

Research is a fact finding exercise. The public relations practitioner in the course of his practice, engages in a lot of public relations research. This is done before, during and after a public relations campaign. Public relations practitioners research before PR campaigns so as to know the major problems on ground, research is done during the campaign so as to find out how the campaign is going while research is done after the campaign so as to evaluate the campaign either in success or in failure. This is what is simply referred to as evaluation. Public relations is a research-based activity. Research provides information with which public relations decisions are taken and programmes are planned. Public relations research helps in understanding the terrain upon which to operate and how to tread cautiously and carefully in a bid to sustain goodwill for an organisation.

Research is very important in public relations. It is an activity that is aimed at obtaining facts about the feelings of the publics of an organisation. The data obtained from research is used as a yardstick for taking decision. Environmental scanning may be described as the process of monitoring immediate and larger environment of an organization with a view to detecting issues or developments that affect an organisation's operations so as to effectively address them. It could be developments within the organisation or outside the organisation in the host community, the local government area, state or national level or the international level. Trend analysis involves critically examining issues and developments in the society to find out their implications to an organisation in order to advise management what steps to take.

Public relations practice also entails monitoring the reactions of the audience. It as well entails advising the public because, you come in contact with them while you are coordinating. The public relations executive monitors the attitudes and reactions of the internal and external publics to the policies and objectives of the organisation. In the internal arm of an organisation, there are various departments like the account, marketing etc, and in most cases, friction comes into the departments internally. This could result from duplication of function or an overriding of function. The public relations practitioner therefore, monitors the departments in an organisation so that when there is friction, they will quickly interpret the duties of the

various departments for an harmonious working relationship.

### METHODOLOGY:

The survey research method was adopted. The questionnaire was used as instrument of data collection. One hundred (100) copies of questionnaire were distributed to public relations practitioners, media practitioners, students of mass communication and information officers in the information units of Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. The purposive and simple random sampling were used to select the population. The researchers purposively selected the respondents and used the simple random sampling to select the one hundred (100) respondents. The likert scale method of data analysis was used to analyse the data.

### PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS:

After the distribution of the questionnaire to one hundred (100) respondents in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State (the study area), a total of ninety six (96), copies were retrieved, while the remaining four (4) were not returned. Out of the ninety six that were returned, ten (10) copies were not usable. The table below shows the return rate of the questionnaire.

**TABLE I: RETURN RATE OF QUESTIONNAIRE**

Question	No. of respondents	Percentage
Returned and found usable	86	86%
Not usable	10	8%
Not returned	4	6%
<b>Total distributed</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey 2011

The above table shows that the return rate is 86% while the mortality rate is 14%. The return rate is higher than the mortality rate. The mortality rate of 14% does not affect the study because, it is insignificant, compared to the return rate of 86%. Thus, the copies were considered adequate enough to represent the population. The presentation and the analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire was therefore based on the eighty six (86) copies, which were found usable. The 86% was therefore enough to fairly represent the targeted population.

**Research Question 1:** To What Extent Does Jos North Local Government Area Recognise and Make Use of Public Relations?

**Table 2**

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	UD	D	SD	X	DECISION
1	Jos North Local Government Area carries out public relations	34	29	1	11	12	3.7	Accepted
2	Jos North Local Government Area normally carries out opinion research to know about the public relations.	8	12	2	31	33	2.1	Rejected
3	The authority of the Local Government Area relates with its employees	27	38	0	10	11	3.6	Accepted
4	The Local Government sponsors events like sports, festivals and conferences.	13	11	0	14	48	2.1	Rejected
5	The Local Government area carries out public relations frequently	14	11	2	39	14	2.4	Rejected

Source: Field Survey, 2011

The above table shows the information gathered on the extent to which Jos North Local Government Area embraces public relations practice. Five (5) items were used to seek the respondent's views on the research questions. Out of the five items, three were rejected while the remaining two were accepted. Items 1, 2, 3, 4



and 5 translated into 3.7, 2.1, 3.6, 2.1 and 2.4 table mean respectively, each indicating that the extent to which public relations is embraced by Jos North Local Government area is poor. Item 1 indicates that the local government area carries out public relations. Item 2 indicates that Jos North local government area does not carry out opinion research to know about the opinions of the public about its policies, programmes, etc, item 3 shows that the local government relates with its employees, item 4 shows that the local government area does not sponsor events like sports, conferences and festivals. Item 5 shows that the local government does not carry out public relations regularly, rather, it is an occasion basis.

The implication of the data in table 2 is that Jos North Local Government Area Council does not give due recognition to public relations practice. When an organisation does not give due recognition to the practice of public relations, it will definitely experience negative attitudes of both the internal and external publics. Public relations is not what is done today and abandoned tomorrow; it is a continuous exercise. It must be on a regular basis, so as to maintain mutual understanding with the publics. Thus, that the organisation does not carry out public relations activities on a constant basis, that opinion research is not carried out and that the local government does not sponsor events like sports, conferences and festivals, indicate that the extent to which Jos North Local Government embraces and makes use of public relations in poor.

**Research Question 2:** Is the Inadequate Public Relations Activities in Jos North Local Government Area one of the Causes of the Incessant Crisis in Jos North?

**Table 3**

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	UD	D	SD	X	DECISION
6	Public relations is an effective tool for crisis management	60	19	0	7	0	4.5	Accepted
7	Inadequate public relations leads to crisis.	54	22	2	5	3	4.3	Accepted
8	The crisis in Jos does not have any link with poor public relations.	11	9	5	23	38	2.2	Rejected
9	The plateau state government has not adequately harnessed public relations strategies for the resolution of Jos crisis	33	38	4	6	5	4.0	Accepted
10	Relative peace will reign in Jos when the government appreciates the role of public relations in crisis management	44	39	0	0	3	4.4	Accepted

**Source:** Field Survey 2011

Table 3 shows the mean score on the information gathered on whether the inadequate public relations activities is partly responsible for the lingering crisis in Jos, plateau state. Five items sought the assessment of respondents in which the 5 questions were accepted. Item 6 shows that public relations is an effective tool for crisis management in any modern society. Item 7 shows that the inadequate public relations activities in Jos North Local Government Area in Plateau State is one reasons for the lingering crisis in the Local Government. When the government does not effectively relate with people during crisis, it may lead to series of crisis. Item 8 shows that the crisis in Jos North Local Government is partly as a result of the poor public relations activities in Jos North Local Government Area. Item 9 shows that the Plateau State Government has not adequately harnessed the potentials of public relations for conflict resolution. While item 10 shows that relative peace will reign will the government of Plateau State appreciates the role of public relations in crisis management.

The implication of the above is that for the mere fact that the government of plateau state does not give due attention to public relations as a tool for crisis management is partly responsible for incessant crisis in plateau state.

**Research Question 3:** What are the Factors that Hinder the Effective Practice of Public Relations in Jos North Local Government Area?

**Table 4**

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	UD	D	SD	X	DECISION
11	Reactive public relations hinder effective practice of public relations in Jos North Local Government	39	41	0	0	6	3.5	Accepted
12	Untrained public relations practitioners serve as hindrance to public relations practice in Jos North	44	39	0	0	3	4.2	Accepted
13	Non recognition of public relations as a management function hinders public relations practice in Jos North Local Government	40	29	1	6	10	3.9	Accepted
14	Poor funding of information units hinders effective practice of public relations in Jos North Local Government Council	38	32	5	3	7	4.0	Accepted
15	The nonchalant attitudes of the information officers hinder effective practice of public relations in Jos North Local Government Area.	29	42	3	0	10	3.8	Accepted

Table 4 shows the mean score on the information obtained on the factors that hinder effective public relations practice in Jos North Local Government Area. Several factors were identified as hindrances to effective public relations in Jos North Local Government Area. Five items sought the responses of the respondents in which all the five variables were accepted. Item 11 which translates into table mean of 3.5 shows that reactive public relations can serve as hindrance to public relations practice in an organisation. Item 12 which translates into 4.2 table mean shows that untrained public relations practitioners serve as a hindrance to public relations practice in Jos North Local Government Area. Item 13 which translates to 3.0 shows that non-recognition of public relations as a management function hinders effective public relations in Jos North Local Government Area. Item 14 which translated into 4.0 table mean shows that poor funding is one of the problems of public relations practice in Jos North Local Government Area. While item 15 which translated into 3.8 shows that the nonchalant attitudes of the information officers in the local Government hinders effective public relations practice.

#### **SUMMARY:**

The data collected and analysed showed that although the Local government endeavours to inform the people about its policies and programmes, the information provided is done on an occasional basis. On the basis of the statistics available, the paper concludes that, the extent to which Jos North Local Government recognises and makes use of public relations in the administration of the local populace, is little. This is evident in its non-regular provision of information to the people which they administer.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

This study recommends that:

- The local government should evolve public relations policies, which will serve as guides towards their attainment of public relations objectives. Good public relations enables the government to develop a keen sense of social responsibility, as well as, political responsibility.
- Public relations should delve into regular communication of the local government's policies and programmes to the people. This enhances the local government's openness and ability to mobilise the rural populace for developmental purposes. If the local government is to be accepted as the government at the grassroots, then the people have to be carried along.
- Local government administrators should make adequate provision of finance, human and material resources to the public relations units to enable them embark on effective public relations practice. Such provision should assist the public relations units to effectively research into the public perception of their

- local governments, so as to provide enough information for the local governments to adjust.
- d. The local government should strengthen their community, employee and media relations by enhancing the status of the information units, through the provision of funds and enough facilities to enable them perform better. This recommendations stem from the fact that these three areas deserve special attention by any organisation.
  - e. The local government should endeavour to train the existing staff in their various information units as professional public relations practitioners. This will enhance the staff performance and ease the problems often encountered in the course of performing their duties.

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